

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a computer system comprising at least one first computer in an existing cluster of computers and one second computer, the system for processing consecutive inquiries of an external computer, the method comprising:

observing the processing time that the first computer requires for processing a first inquiry of the external computer;

performing an availability test to identify the second computer;

incorporating the second computer into the existing cluster, if, based on the availability test, no suitable computer is available in the existing cluster; and

rerouting a second inquiry from the first computer to the second computer if the processing time exceeds a standard time, the method being characterised in that the standard time is dependent on the type of inquiry.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the standard time is dependent on the configuration of the first computer.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the processing time is determined relative to a quantity of data.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the processing times of consecutive inquiries are taken into account during observation.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of observing is performed by an observer module and the step of rerouting is performed by a rerouter module.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the steps of observation and rerouting are induced by a management program within the system.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium that stores a set of instructions that when executed performs a method of routing external computer inquiries, the computer-readable medium executed by the set of instructions comprising:

prompting an application to observe the processing time that a first computer in an existing cluster of computers requires for processing a first inquiry of an external computer,

prompting the application to perform an availability test to identify a second computer;

prompting the application to incorporate the second computer into the existing cluster, if, based on the availability test, no suitable computer is available in the existing cluster; and

prompting the application to reroute a second inquiry from the first computer to the second computer if the processing time exceeds a standard time, wherein the standard time is dependent on the type of inquiry.

8. (Currently Amended) A system for processing consecutive inquiries from an external computer comprising:

a first computer in an existing cluster of computers;

a second computer; and

an application operative to perform an availability test to identify the second computer; incorporate the second computer into the existing cluster, if, based on the availability test, no suitable computer is available in the existing cluster; and observe the processing time that the first computer requires for processing a first inquiry of an external computer and to reroute a second inquiry from the first computer to the second computer if the processing time exceeds a standard time, wherein the standard time is dependent on the type of inquiry.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the processing time is the floating average time that the first computer requires for processing a stipulated number of inquiries.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the standard time is fixed relative to a stipulated number of inquiries such that rerouting occurs only when the processing time exceeds the standard time in more than a predetermined number of allowed incidences.

11. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the standard time is dependent on the configuration of the first computer.
12. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the processing time is determined relative to a quantity of data.
13. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the processing times of consecutive inquiries are taken into account during observation.
14. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the processing time is the floating average time that the first computer requires for processing a stipulated number of inquiries.
15. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the standard time is fixed relative to a stipulated number of inquiries such that rerouting occurs only when the processing time exceeds the standard time in more than a predetermined number of allowed incidences.
16. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the standard time is dependent on the configuration of the first computer.
17. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the processing time is determined relative to a quantity of data.

18. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the processing times of consecutive inquiries are taken into account during observation.

19. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the processing time is the floating average time that the first computer requires for processing a stipulated number of inquiries.

20. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the standard time is fixed relative to a stipulated number of inquiries such that rerouting occurs only when the processing time exceeds the standard time in more than a predetermined number of allowed incidences.